

An adjourned meeting of the Council of the City of Bedford, Virginia, from the February 11, 1997, regular meeting was held at Avenel at 12:00 noon, February 15, 1997.

Members present: Mayor G. Michael Shelton; Councilman H. Davis Ballard; Vice Mayor Larry D. Brookshier; Councilwoman Mary L. Flood; Councilwoman Linda Kochendarfer; Councilman W. D. Tharp; and Councilman Robert T. Wandrei.

Members absent: None.

Staff present: City Manager Jack A. Gross; City Attorney W. W. Berry, IV; and Clerk of the Council Teresa W. Hatcher.

Mayor Shelton opened the meeting.

Fran Hart, Director of Parks, Recreation & Cemeteries, reviewed funding requests for the following projects: Reynolds Park, \$39,000; Edmund Street Park, \$28,000; practice fields at the old landfill site, \$79,900.

The funding requests for Reynolds Park and Edmund Street Park will be included in the proposed budget.

Ms. Hart reviewed proposed recreation fees:

Youth sports participation fee for city residents: \$10.00

Youth sports participation fee for county residents: \$20.00

LEAP Program - increase fee from \$20 to \$25 per child

CASE Program - increase fee from \$20 to \$22 per child per week

Class and trip fees - increase by an average of \$2.00

The recreation fees presented by Ms. Hart are to be included in the proposed budget.

Ms. Hart reviewed a cemetery price structure and a discussion ensued.

Other topics discussed included: the opening of Section IV of Greenwood Cemetery; the possible donation of labor by the local National Guard for work at Reynolds Park; and the entrance road for the National D-Day Memorial.

It was the consensus of Council that the staff develop a policy for the cemetery fund to break even in three years; that Section IV of Greenwood Cemetery be opened in the fall of 1997 as recommended by Ms. Hart with lots being sold at full price; and that prices for services increase by 40% beginning with FY 1997-98 and continue increasing over the following two fiscal years in order to reduce the level of subsidization to zero.

Clarke Gibson, Director of Public Works, made the following recommendations concerning the landfill tipping fees:

- establish a "Solid Waste Enterprise Fund." To balance the fund, the landfill tipping fee would be increased to \$55.53/ton. The tipping fee would: pay off the existing debt on the landfill, Phase 1A, 1B, and Phase 2; allow the City to save funds to pay for Phases 3 and 4, without incurring more debt; cover the operational expenses of the next landfill; include a fund to finance the closure of the landfill; fund the current monitoring and closure monitoring of the

landfill.

- eliminate the tipping fee rate structure for businesses and residential (have a \$55.53 across the board tipping fee), except retain no charge to residential customers with loads of 0-260 lbs.
- evaluate all fees annually.

Mr. Gibson reviewed recommendations for residential collection fees:

- raise residential monthly refuse collection/disposal fee from \$4.00 per month to:
 - \$6.35 per month -Plan A (includes dumpsters)
 - \$5.97 per month -Plan B (does not include public dumpsters)

Discussion ensued with members of Council suggesting the following:

- no charge to residential customers with loads of 0 - 500 lbs.
- round off fees to the next dollar

The solid waste enterprise fund, in terms of tipping and collection fees, is to be reviewed by the Solid Waste Committee with a recommendation back to the City Manager for budget development.

Mr. Gibson reviewed the results of a study of the refuse collection for businesses. Mr. Gibson also reviewed possible changes that could be made in the business refuse collection rate structure.

The City Manager indicated that the study reflected the City's costs over a one week period.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Gibson gave the following estimates concerning the National D-Day Memorial infrastructure placement:

1400 ft. 8" water line @ \$25 per ft. \$35,000

1150 ft. 8" sewer line @ \$20 per ft. 23,000

5 manholes 4,250

Contingency 7,750

Total \$70,000

City Attorney Berry explained the section of the agreement with the D-Day Memorial Foundation regarding the access road to the D-Day Memorial site.

Discussion ensued regarding the use of recreation access road funds to build the access road to the D-Day Memorial:

- the bike trail concept was discussed. City Manager Gross reported that the route would have

to be signed through the City and that there would be no construction required. The route would include a section at the D-Day Memorial site.

It was the consensus of Council to agree conceptually with a bike/walking path and amphitheater at the D-Day Memorial which puts the City into position for recreation access road funds.

The City Manager is to pursue establishing a bike route through the City which would include the D-Day Memorial using the ISTEA funds.

Mr. Gibson gave an update on the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade:

- proposals were received in December 1996 from nine engineering firms
- the selection committee evaluated the proposals and interviewed five engineering firms in January.
- the committee ranked R. Stuart Royer & Associates and Eckenfelder, Inc., as number one
- negotiations with R. Stuart Royer & Associates are expected to be complete by the end of February.
- estimated costs: \$320,492 for the design of the plant

\$295,082 for support studies

\$3.2 million for construction

- proposed financing - Virginia Revolving Loan Fund

The City Manager gave an explanation of the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrade.

Mr. Gibson stated that a water and sewer rate study is included as part of the engineering contract. The study will be performed to look at all the details and determine how the costs should be split up between the water rates and the sewer rates in order to balance the fund.

Council took a break from 1:50 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.

Jay Scudder, Director of Planning & Community Development, reviewed information on the following:

- population growth for student enrollment for City students
 - enrollment and classroom space at the City schools
 - basic costs of gymnasiums
- feasibility study for a renovation of 1912 grammar school

Option A - Renovation of existing facility - \$75 per sq. ft.

\$1.5 million - 12 classrooms and a gymnasium

Option B - Expansion and renovation -(would incorporate the Middle School

Facilities Utilization Plan) - 37,700 sq. ft. Addition - \$5.5 million - total project of approximately \$6.5 million.

City Manager Gross reviewed information showing the City's 1985 and 1988 school contract obligations.

Discussion ensued.

Mayor Shelton reported that the City School Board would like to be included in discussions on this issue.

A question was raised regarding discussion of the middle school concept and gymnasium at last year's retreat.

The City Manager is to provide members of Council with copies of the minutes of the last retreat held in February 1996.

Council requested copies of the information reviewed by Mr. Scudder regarding the middle school gymnasium and classrooms. Council will schedule a meeting with the School Board.

Mr. Scudder gave a brief overview of the roof repairs at the Middle School. Mr. Scudder stated that the following will be bid out: repairs which will include an alternate bid for a recovery system. The bids will be analyzed and then a decision will be made.

Mr. Scudder spoke regarding the mobile units at Bedford Elementary School. Mr. Scudder reported that a City ordinance states that trailers are not allowed in the City unless the trailers are being used temporarily for construction purposes. The City Attorney and Mr. Scudder will be reviewing this matter and suggesting changes in the ordinance.

It was the consensus of Council to allow the installation of two double mobile classrooms at Bedford Elementary School. The City Attorney suggested that the ordinance include a time limit for a trailer of a maximum of five years, and that a permit can be issued for two years or whatever is determined by Council.

Mr. Scudder reviewed information concerning land acquisition for the Bedford Center for Business and "wish list" for Phase II.

Discussion ensued regarding the industrial park.

Gene Ratzlaff, Electric Utility Director, reviewed a chart showing load growth in the City's electric system.

Mr. Ratzlaff explained the following capital needs in the Electric Department:

1. Macon Street Substation Upgrade \$350,000
2. Main Substation \$100,000
3. Spare Transformer \$ 60,000
4. Burks & Box Factory 12 kV Substation Conversion \$ 55,000
5. D-Day Memorial \$ 22,000
6. Install SCADA System \$120,000

Total \$707,000

The City Manager stated that these items have been approved budget items for the last three years, but have not been funded because the refund from Appalachian Power Company has not been received. Mr. Gross indicated that the City cannot wait for the refund any longer as it is necessary that these items be ordered, even if it means the transfer to the general fund is less.

Mayor Shelton asked Mr. Ratzlaff to review some of the other projects with the Electric Committee.

City Attorney Berry reported that the option with Dr. Dennis H. Robinson to purchase Robinson Way for \$10,000 expires on March 7.

Mr. Berry stated the City also has an option with Dr. Robinson to purchase his office lot on North Bridge Street for the assessed value. The City Attorney reported that the Wharton Memorial Foundation has proposed that the City exercise the option on the Robinson office building lot and that upon closing with Dr. Robinson the City immediately convey the property to the Foundation by deed of assumption under which the Foundation will covenant to assume all City obligations. The Foundation proposes that the covenant will be secured by an escrow agreement between the Foundation and the City under which the Foundation will post security satisfactory to the City (most probably cash) to cover the future note payments. Mr. Berry gave an explanation of these proceedings.

Members of Council were given copies of a letter dated February 14, 1997, from Mr. Fred Duis, President of the Wharton Memorial Foundation which explained the Foundation's proposal in regard to purchasing the Robinson office building lot. The letter indicated that the Foundation's proposal would result in rehabilitation of a valuable historical building. Also mentioned in the letter were the advantages to the City: the City will secure parking for the buildings, control over future development and use of the property, and the ability to implement the plan for public gardens extending southward from the library.

The purchase of the road right-of-way for Robinson Way and the option for the Robinson office building lot will be placed on the agenda of the next regular Council meeting.

Discussion ensued.

The City Attorney will make the necessary arrangements with regard to exercising the option to purchase the Robinson office building lot and then conveying the property to the Wharton Foundation, and will include conditions that are consistent with the uses permitted at the Charles Wharton House.

The City Attorney spoke regarding the Wharton Garden Plan, which was prepared by Robert McDuffie. Mr. Berry suggested that the next step would be for Council to adopt the plan, and authorize the Wharton Foundation to proceed in conjunction with the matching grant program.

The approval of the Wharton Garden Plan will be included on the agenda of the next regular meeting.

Council took at five minute break.

Milton Graham, Chief of Police, spoke regarding the community police officer. The Chief reported that the grant is effective through February 1998. This position will cost the City a little over \$15,000 this year. The Chief plans to ask for full funding for this position when the grant funds are depleted.

The Chief gave an update on the regional jail.

Chief Graham explained that the City will be receiving an amendment to the agreement which would allow

the regional jail to receive a payment up front each year based on an estimate of the number of people in the facility.

The Chief reported that Bedford City and Bedford County have entered into an agreement with the City of Lynchburg for use of the Juvenile Detention Home. It is estimated that at any given time the City of Bedford and Bedford County need five beds. Chief Graham stated Lynchburg has agreed to furnish those five beds at \$60 per person per day (cost could vary).

Chief Graham reported on the status of the Regional Radio System. The Chief indicated that most of the sites have been acquired, and construction has already been started on some of the tower sites. The system is under budget at this time and is scheduled to be online in the first quarter of 1998.

Discussion ensued regarding the 911 system and the location of the communications center. The Chief stated that Bedford County would like to have the communications center in the basement of the new Sheriff's Office across from the County Nursing Home.

Discussion ensued regarding the cost of the new Sheriff's Office and Communications Center, which includes a pistol range.

It was the consensus of Council that the City Manager write a letter to the Sheriff saying the County Sheriff's Department can utilize the City's shooting range and that the City will not participate in building a new range for the County.

There was discussion concerning the Emergency Services Coordinator, the communications center, and the dispatchers.

Barry Thompson, Assistant City Manager, reported the estimated total cost of the renovations to the Bedford County Court House complex is \$8,874,000 and the City's share would be approximately \$1,041,808, which is 11.74%.

Mr. Thompson spoke regarding the request by the Bedford City/County Museum for Council to include \$12,500 in the proposed FY 1997-98 budget for Architect and Engineering funds for renovations of the Bedford City/County Museum.

It was the consensus of Council that \$12,500 be included in the Special Request for Funding section of the FY 1997-98 proposed budget for Architect and Engineering funds for renovations of the Bedford City/County Museum.

Mr. Thompson reported on funding for the Safe Haven program.

Short term needs of the program: funding in the amount of \$12,000 to continue the program from April - June 30, 1997.

Long term needs of the program: funding in the amount of \$48,000 to continue the program in the next fiscal year.

The Chief of Police reviewed the activities of the Safe Haven program.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of the County School Board participating in paying for one-half of the cost of the Safe Haven program.

It was the consensus of Council to include funds in the amount of \$24,000 in the proposed FY 1997-98

budget for the Safe Haven program if the Bedford County School Board agrees to fund the other \$24,000.

Mr. Thompson made a presentation regarding the effects of increases in the following revenue sources: real estate taxes, personal property taxes, machinery and tools tax, and motor vehicle license tax.

Mr. Thompson also reviewed possible new sources of revenue: impose tax on tobacco products, utility consumer tax (telephone/cellular phones, electric, water), and utility license tax (telephone/cellular phones, electric, water).

Mr. Thompson is to furnish copies of the information he reviewed to members of Council.

The City Manager reviewed a summary of FY 1997/98 revenue sources.

Discussion ensued regarding a personnel downsizing plan which could include: 1. Elimination or freezing of part-time positions 2. Freezing vacant positions 3. Early retirement concept.

Mr. Gross reviewed a chart which listed financing costs per \$1,000,000.

The City Manager reviewed information on tax rates and fees as follows:

The City of Bedford has not increased the real estate tax rate for 12 years; has not increased the personal property tax rate for 12 years; has not increased the machinery and tools tax for 12 years; has not increased the motor vehicle license fee for more than 19 years; has not increased cemetery rates for 5 years; and last adjusted sewer and water rates 8 years ago.

Mayor Shelton reviewed various items on the agenda and directions given were included in the minutes with each applicable agenda item.

The staff is to study development of a personnel downsizing plan.

Members of Council made comments about the following various items: the need for more space in the Municipal Building; the dental clinic at the Primary School; and the need to expand the on-site parking at the Primary School.

Assistant City Manager Thompson stated that the City's fund balances are being depleted because expenses are exceeding revenue. Mr. Thompson stated the City is in the situation where increases are needed, either through balancing the enterprise fund or raising revenues in the general fund.

Discussion ensued regarding the electric system.

Mayor Shelton adjourned the meeting at 6:21 p.m.